



# Indiana Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan 2006-2010

## *Hoosiers Moving Forward*







STATE OF INDIANA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
State House, Second Floor  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

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Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr.  
*Governor*

December, 2006

Dear Outdoor Recreation Enthusiasts:

Indiana has made great strides since the last Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) was published. Through the Indiana Heritage Trust and the Land and Water Conservation Fund, we have purchased many acres that have been developed as recreational sites at the state, county and local levels. These sites are being made available for public use for Hoosiers throughout our state.

This edition of our outdoor recreation plan highlights important public input and provides valuable resources available to meet community needs for direction and growth. Being active in outdoor recreation will help improve the health, well-being and quality of life for all Hoosiers.

I hope that our local communities will use this plan and these priorities developed in concert with your fellow Hoosiers as a planning guide.

Providing quality outdoor recreation opportunities is a great service to Indiana's citizens. This effort benefits the state and its citizens through improved physical and mental health, increased revenues and interaction among our diverse population.

Let us work together to build a better and healthier future for our state!

Sincerely,

Mitch Daniels

Dear Fellow Hoosiers,

I am pleased to present the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for 2006-10. This document outlines the myriad recreational opportunities and activities that can be enjoyed in Indiana, not only by Hoosiers, but also by visitors. Hunting, fishing, walking, horseback riding, boating, snowmobiling, four-wheeling, fairs, festivals and camping are just a few examples. Sites for these pursuits abound, from the shores of Lake Michigan to the Ohio River banks, from the Illinois line to the Ohio state border. The destinations vary in size and feeling, from quaint community parks to acre upon acre of Hoosier National Forest.

As we continue into the 21st Century, the diversity of our recreational opportunities continues to grow, in large part, because of the strong partnerships we have developed between state, federal and local levels of government, as well as, with private owners. The willingness of Hoosiers to complete surveys and participate in focus groups that provide the information necessary for the completion of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is another reason for the increasing diversity.

These partnerships have been no accident. The embodiment of cooperation has been the SCORP that is completed by the DNR's Division of Outdoor Recreation every five years.

This document is a handbook for outdoor recreation providers. From private owners and providers to managers of federally owned lands, the SCORP puts forth solid, detailed guidelines to help meet community needs and preferences.

The SCORP provides a framework for local communities to apply for federal grants and recreation programs. So far Hoosier communities have received nearly \$100 million for recreation programs that benefit each of us. Whether it has been through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Recreation Trails Program, Indiana Waters or the Hometown Indiana, the SCORP has been the starting place for projects that keep Hoosiers in touch with our natural resources.

So explore this SCORP. Employ its recommendations. Let us always seek to find new opportunities to improve the quality of life for all Hoosiers, enhance the economic development of our communities and promote the natural beauty of our State.

Sincerely,



Robert E. Carter, Jr.



# Indiana Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan 2006-2010

*HOOSIERS MOVING FORWARD*

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*January 2007*

*The preparation of this plan was financed in part through a planning grant from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, under the provisions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (Public Law 88-578, as amended).*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

*SCORP Vision Statement and Goals*  
*Land and Water Conservation Fund*

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<i>SCORP 2006-10 Outdoor Recreation Priorities for Providers and Stakeholders</i>	
<b>CHAPTER 1 Outdoor Recreation Assessments.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<i>Indiana Department of Natural Resources Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey</i>	
<i>Indiana Boater Survey</i>	
<i>2004 Designate Trails Survey (Trail-User Survey)</i>	
<i>Recreation Issues - Provider Survey</i>	
<i>Professional Trails - Provider Survey</i>	
<b>CHAPTER 2 Comparing and Contrasting Themes and Trends .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<i>Limitations of the Surveys</i>	
<i>What Sets Each of the Six Surveys Apart?</i>	
<i>Common Themes</i>	
<i>Other Common Themes or Trends</i>	
<i>Some Contrasting Themes</i>	
<i>Needs Analysis</i>	
<b>CHAPTER 3 Outdoor Recreation Supply .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<i>Recreation, Parks and Open Space Guidelines</i>	
<i>Local Outdoor Recreation Supply – Township, Municipal, County, and Privately owned but open for public use</i>	
<i>Regional Outdoor Recreation Supply – State and Federal</i>	
<i>Total Outdoor Recreation Supply-Local and Regional</i>	
<i>Conclusion of Total Outdoor Recreation Acres</i>	
<i>Critical Counties and Regions</i>	
<b>CHAPTER 4 Indiana Wetlands.....</b>	<b>77</b>
<i>Definition and Traits (from the EWRA)</i>	
<i>Benefits to Hoosiers (from the IWCP)</i>	
<i>Acres in Indiana</i>	
<i>Actions and Initiatives for Wetlands Conservation in Indiana</i>	
<i>Indiana Priorities for Wetlands Conservation</i>	
<b>CHAPTER 5 Accessibility and Universal Design .....</b>	<b>87</b>
<i>Accessibility and Universal Design Explained</i>	
<i>The Americans with Disabilities Act versus Universal Design</i>	
<i>Universal Design Examples in Indiana</i>	

<b>CHAPTER 6 Outdoor Recreation: Its Relationship with Health, Well-being, and Aging .....</b>	<b>95</b>
<i>The National Picture</i>	
<i>The State Picture</i>	
<i>It's a Balancing Act</i>	
<i>A Specialized Population</i>	
<b>Chapter 7 The Final Word .....</b>	<b>105</b>
<i>DNR ORGANIZATIONAL CHART.....</i>	<i>108</i>
<i>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISIONS .....</i>	<i>109</i>
<i>OTHER RELATED INDIANA GOVERNMENT OFFICES.....</i>	<i>111</i>

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A	<i>Indiana Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey.....</i>	<i>113</i>
APPENDIX B1	<i>Indiana General Population Survey on Boating in Indiana .....</i>	<i>118</i>
APPENDIX B2	<i>Indiana Registered Boaters Survey on Boating in Indiana .....</i>	<i>145</i>
APPENDIX C	<i>2004 Trails Designate Survey – Survey America .....</i>	<i>167</i>
APPENDIX D	<i>2004 Recreation Issues Survey – Ball State University.....</i>	<i>168</i>
APPENDIX E	<i>2004 Trail Issues Survey – IDNR-OR.....</i>	<i>174</i>
APPENDIX F	<i>Indiana regions and the counties within .....</i>	<i>182</i>
APPENDIX G	<i>Universal Design.....</i>	<i>183</i>
APPENDIX H	<i>Acronyms used in the SCORP .....</i>	<i>186</i>
	<i>BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES .....</i>	<i>187</i>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	<i>Comparison of 15 most commonly used bodies of water by user population.....</i>	<i>28</i>
Table 2.	<i>Frequency of parks partnering with other stakeholders to provide outdoor recreation opportunities by percentage .....</i>	<i>35</i>
Table 3.	<i>Comparison of major issues identified by open-ended questions .....</i>	<i>37</i>
Table 4.	<i>Capital projects planned in the next five years (N = 182).....</i>	<i>38</i>
Table 5.	<i>Facility renovation projects planned in the next five years (N = 182) ..</i>	<i>38</i>
Table 6.	<i>Survey methods.....</i>	<i>46</i>
Table 7.	<i>Recurrent themes.....</i>	<i>47</i>
Table 8.	<i>Contrasting themes from user and provider surveys.....</i>	<i>52</i>
Table 9.	<i>Activity trends in Indiana, top 10 ranked in order.....</i>	<i>58</i>
Table 10.	<i>County recreation acres-local .....</i>	<i>60</i>
Table 11.	<i>Indiana region outdoor recreation acres-local .....</i>	<i>63</i>
Table 12.	<i>County outdoor recreation acres-regional.....</i>	<i>64</i>
Table 13.	<i>Indiana region outdoor recreation acres-regional .....</i>	<i>67</i>
Table 14.	<i>County outdoor recreation acres-total .....</i>	<i>68</i>
Table 15.	<i>Indiana region outdoor recreation acres-total .....</i>	<i>71</i>
Table 16.	<i>2006 Critical counties: Outdoor recreation acres-local .....</i>	<i>74</i>
Table 17.	<i>2006 Critical counties: Outdoor recreation acres-total .....</i>	<i>74</i>
Table 18.	<i>Indiana wetland acres .....</i>	<i>80</i>



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Participation percentages by activity .....	23
Figure 2.	Time willing to travel to new or improved recreation facilities .....	25
Figure 3.	Who participated in activities with respondent .....	26
Figure 4.	Important reasons respondents boat.....	27
Figure 5.	Topics boaters would like to receive information about .....	30
Figure 6.	Organizations' degree of importance placed on trail-use opportunities ..	39
Figure 7.	County outdoor recreation – local .....	62
Figure 8.	County outdoor recreation – regional .....	66
Figure 9.	Indiana region outdoor recreation – total.....	72
Figure 10.	2006 Critical counties.....	75
Figure 11.	Indiana Wetlands Reserve Program locations.....	81
Figure 12.	ADA-compliant entry doors .....	88
Figure 13.	ADA-compliant entry doors with universal design principals applied ....	88
Figure 14.	Overweight trends.....	96
Figure 15.	Obesity trends .....	97
Figure 16.	Physical activity trends.....	98

## SCORP VISION STATEMENT

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan examines Indiana's recreation resources for the social, physical and economic benefit of the State's citizens through evaluation of the status of outdoor recreation in Indiana.

We envision that readers will use the SCORP as an informational resource that promotes research, cooperation and partnerships for effective guidance and planning in recreation decision-making.

### THIS SCORP'S GOALS ARE TO:

- Qualify Indiana for Land and Water Conservation Funds.
- Establish outdoor recreation funding priorities, including those for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Recreational Trails Program, and any existing and/or future funds available through the State budget process.
- Conduct an investigation of recreation supply and demand.
- Help improve the provision of outdoor recreation for all users.



## LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND (L&WCF)

The SCORP ensures Indiana's eligibility to receive L&WCF grant monies. The purpose of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended (78 Stat. 897) is:

"The purposes of this act are to assist in preserving, developing, and assuring accessibility to all the citizens of the United States of America of present and future generations and visitors who are lawfully present within the boundaries of the United States of America such quality and quantity of outdoor recreation resources as may be available and are necessary and desirable for individual active participation in such recreation and to strengthen the health and vitality of the citizens of the United States by: (1) providing funds for and authorizing Federal assistance to the States in planning, acquisition, and development of needed land and water areas and facilities and (2) providing funds for the Federal acquisition and development of certain lands and other areas."

(U.S. Department of the Interior, n.d.)

The main objectives of outdoor recreation have remained the same since 1965. They include land acquisition, preservation, provision, development, accessibility, and strengthening the health and vitality of our nation. This SCORP shows that Indiana's focus is still directly in line with the L&WCF.

One way Indiana ensures smaller entities (e.g., counties, townships, municipalities) can provide outdoor recreation opportunities to their citizens is through the appropriation of L&WCF grants. These grants are administered by the IDNR, Division of Outdoor Recreation. Sixteen projects were funded between 2004 and current (11/2006). The majority of the projects included land acquisition, 13 projects incorporated trail development, and three integrated new aquatic features. Other amenities were:

- Wildlife observation/ photography decks
- Wetlands observation decks
- Picnic areas
- Interpretive/education facilities
- Playgrounds
- 3-D archery range
- Native landscape/prairie development

Total cost of these projects was an estimated \$8,202,876. Nearly 44% (\$3,578,285) was covered by L&WCF grants. These funds are vitally important as outdoor recreation providers struggle with increasing budget constraints. Unfortunately grants cannot include every project in the State; therefore, alternative funding methods will be discussed.







## INTRODUCTION

The State of Indiana uses the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) to qualify for funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF) and to apply for other federal funding. Additionally, the SCORP has been developed to assist municipalities and organizations throughout Indiana in assessing needs, presenting facility and program development plans for grants and other outside funding, and following those plans to achieve improvements on the local level.

The SCORP is based on data collected throughout the State. The data-collection process ensures a comprehensive and representative sample. The SCORP Plan Advisory Committee and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Division of Outdoor Recreation (DOR) hold that the information presented validly represents the citizens of Indiana. Additional information gathered by the U.S.

Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service specific to Indiana has been used to supplement and offset possible weaknesses. For example, combining State- and federally collected data represented racial and ethnic groups better.

The data from surveys and studies for this SCORP, former SCORPs and tangential fields has been analyzed to determine both snapshots and broad trends in outdoor recreation. Some of the items identified include population preferences, trends in the general population, and issues faced by parks and municipalities within the outdoor recreation arena. Each of these items can potentially affect needs, demands and supplies. One example of "conflicting" identifiable trends is the constant popularity of walking. Walking has been the users' preferred outdoor activity since 1993. This indicates a preference toward an increase in trail systems. One barrier for park managers and boards is finding funding for capital projects, which could include the addition of





a walking trail to the local park system. Another more important major issue for parks is funding the maintenance, improvement, or upgrading of current facilities. This apparent conflict of interests can prevent the further compromise and agreement necessary for assembling the master plans that are essential for obtaining grant funding.

The late Suzanne Mathis (d. 2005), executive director of the Indiana Park and Recreation Association, wrote the following specifically for this SCORP. We use her paraphrased words to begin our course toward discovering the strengths, weaknesses and future of outdoor recreation in Indiana:

***Parks and Recreation:  
An Essential Service***

Parks and recreation is fun and enjoyment ... but it goes beyond just the fun.

It is fundamental to the quality of life for all people, communities and our environment. The value of parks and recreation has been identified many times as a factor in determining the "good life."

With the obesity epidemic and the fight against a sedentary lifestyle, the value of recreation both inside and out of doors is even more important to our citizens today. In a recent report from the Trust for America's Health, Indiana is the ninth most obese state, 26 % of adults do not participate in regular exercise. The direct connection between the health of our communities and the opportunities provided for an active, healthy lifestyle is a basic human need.

When considering outdoor recreation, whether you look at the economic benefits of increased property values or the enhanced self esteem gained by an individual from participating in a special event or through becoming active and healthier. Or you look at the community awareness strengthened by a festival, or gain better understanding of the stewardship of land, we are now more than ever an essential service.

We must continue to form positive, active partnerships and collaborations to meet these needs, both now and in the future. We must complement the other services and focus on a common goal to create a quality of life in our communities that everyone wants and deserves.

A grassroots effort to promote public awareness of the existence and provision of parks and recreation activities is essential. Some simple suggestions to help with this effort:

- Write opinion pieces for your local newspaper, cable TV and other community bulletin boards.
- Make sure that your facility is well represented on your municipal, county or State Web site.
- Make sure your brown signs with your park names and arrows with directions are posted and visible.
- Keep your services in the minds of



tion provided in this SCORP.

Let's continue to invest in the future and fulfill the dreams of the families in our Indiana communities. Services provided through parks and recreation are essential, appreciated and limitless. (Mathis, 2005)

Since the printing of Mathis's original letter, Indiana has moved into a tie with South Carolina for eighth in nation-

communities by using banners, radio ads, etc.

- Provide strong customer service and quality management at our parks and facilities.
- Visit [www.inpra.org](http://www.inpra.org) for IPRA's "An Essential Service" presentation prepared by Steve Doniger, Director, Valparaiso Parks and Recreation and Chuck Lehman, President, Lehman and Lehman.

There are many parks and recreation opportunities available throughout the State of Indiana. Whether referring to a bike trail, walking trail, pristine pond at a state park or an elaborate aquatics facility, you see what Joseph Lee ("Father of the Playground Movement" and National Recreation Association president 1910-37) means in the quote: "Play for adults is recreation ... the renewal of life; for children it is growth ... the gaining of life."

While no one can reasonably deny the benefits of parks, recreation and the environment, we still must understand the attitudes and opinions of the users of parks and recreation facilities to help us wisely direct our future economic and advocacy efforts using the informa-

al obesity ranking. Additionally, Indiana ranks 13th for adult diabetes and 20th for hypertension (Trust for America's Health, 2006). Each of these conditions can be prevented or delayed by making healthy lifestyle choices. As providers of outdoor recreation opportunities, we are prime players in the fight against the increase of disabling chronic conditions that could cost individuals and taxpayers millions of dollars to control and treat. By providing opportunities for individuals to meet essential physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual needs, facilitators of outdoor recreation also play an important role in the long-term economy of their communities.

Although we must include all age groups in our plans, we need to pay special attention to serving our aging population. Admittedly, the prevalence of chronic diseases and conditions increases as a population ages, participation in outdoor recreation can contribute to a healthier lifestyle, which can help prevent or delay many conditions associated with aging. These include heart disease, cancer and stroke (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2004). When addressing the needs of older adults, we need





to consider challenges associated with balance, mobility, hearing and vision loss, and greater propensity for injury. According to 2005 U.S. Census Bureau statistics, the median age in Indiana is 36.1 years old, 11.9% of Hoosiers are 65 or older, and 1.3% are 85 and older. The percentage of people 65 and older has remained steady for at least two years; however, the portion 85 and older has increased slightly. These statistics show the importance of considering the State's significant senior and aging mid-range populations when planning for and making decisions about future recreational opportunities.

Fortunately, accessibility and universal design are already high priority issues in our State. Indiana offices promote exceeding the federally mandated Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Guidelines and considering the use of universal design, both for future improvements and alterations to current buildings and for new construction. "Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation or specialized design" (Center for Universal Design, 2006). Universal design includes but is not limited to accessibility; it is a performance- or usability-based design that promotes a product or environment that can be used by a broad spectrum of people (children, elderly, vision or mobility impaired, etc.) (National Center on Accessibility, Universal Design Education On-line, 2004). The benefits of universal design will extend beyond the older population into the realm of citizens with physical or cognitive disabilities. More than 13 percent (13.4%) of Indiana residents 21 to 64 years old reported having a disability in 2005 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). Park and trails professionals in Indiana have expressed a keen desire to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities and limitations by implementing universal

design at their properties. Communities should address the needs of the entire user population and strive to include as many representatives as possible in the planning of a proposed facility, activity, or program. Effective planning that includes universal design will pave the way for individuals of all ages and abilities to be actively involved in outdoor recreation throughout our State.

Another issue faced by communities and facilities managers is how to pay for planned improvements. Grants are one way. Several are administered by IDNR:

- Indiana Heritage Trust
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF)
- Recreational Trails Program (RTP)
- Hometown Indiana (unfunded at this time)
- Wabash River Heritage Corridor Fund (unfunded at this time)
- Shooting Range Program





- Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) Program
- Hoosier Riverwatch Water Monitoring Equipment Grants
- Lake and River Enhancement
- Lake Michigan Coastal Program
- Community Forestry Grant Programs

To learn more about grant programs administered by IDNR go to <http://www.IN.gov/dnr/assistance/grantresources.html>.

IDNR and the Division of Outdoor Recreation continuously assess the needs and desires of users and facility managers. Empirical data are collected through statewide surveys, national surveys, focus groups, planning committees, interviews with natural resources experts and professional publications. Goals or priorities are established to direct the State, regions, counties, municipalities, townships, and private owners to satisfactory compromises that will benefit as many people as possible.

We hope that the information present-

ed in this document will help community members and outdoor recreation facilitators bridge the gaps between differing needs and reach the best solutions for all. Remember, outdoor recreation includes a myriad of activities from walking through quiet neighborhoods to enjoying the rich aromas of farmers markets, festivals and fairs, to mountain biking at a State-owned recreation facility or enjoying a game of wheelchair basketball. The outdoor recreation possibilities in Indiana are as endless as your imagination.

### ***Outdoor Recreation Priorities for Providers and Stakeholders***

The following priorities have been established based on the survey data analysis, focus group discussions, and interviews with park and outdoor recreation professionals discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 of this document.





1) Promote long-term planning, budgeting and evaluation for recreation sites, facilities, and equipment maintenance and replacement.

Consider:

- Life cycle
  - Preventive maintenance
  - Projected increased upkeep costs as sites, facilities or equipment age
  - Renovation/replacement for changing user needs
  - Demolition, removal or recycling
  - Replacement costs for end of life cycle
- Changing demographics
  - Universal design
  - Adaptability for changing trends
  - Cultural diversity
- Increasing or decreasing user/server populations
  - Decreases in user travel time
  - Fluctuations in tourism

- Local population variations

2) Investigate non-traditional methods of funding and cost reduction. Consider:

- Not-for-profit organizations
- Private groups/"Friends of ..." groups
- Sponsorships
- Naming rights
- Donations/In kind
  - Monetary
  - Services
  - Products
    - Land
    - Buildings
    - Equipment
- Bequests
- Endowments
- Volunteers
- Partnering

3) Improve marketing of current and proposed recreation opportunities to local communities, tourists, marginal consumers and prospective stakeholders to increase site awareness, user population and revenues.

Consider:

- Product, planning, promotion, and price
- Targeted audiences
- Multi-media sources
- Effective outreach to the target population
  - Benefits to consumer and economy
    - Public presentations
    - In-house presentations
  - Public education and awareness of current or proposed outdoor recreation opportunities
- Sharing ownership
- Networking with outdoor recreational specialists
- Networking with professionals in tangential fields (e.g., health and wellness, engineering and education)

4) Research, develop and implement capital projects that are pertinent to the community and mesh effectively with existing facilities.







- Develop and submit a five-year master plan to the Division of Outdoor Recreation
    - Advocate public participation in the planning process
    - Assess local community needs
      - Stakeholder surveys and focus groups
      - User and non-user surveys and focus groups
      - Community diversity discussions
    - Remain aware of grant availability, criteria, and application process to ensure grant submissions are complete, accurate and meet mandated guidelines
    - Avoid duplicating facilities or programs in surrounding area
    - Include land acquisition as often as possible
    - Review and parallel national, regional and local initiatives and trends, following benchmark examples
- 5) Increase multi-use trails systems.  
Consider:
- Extremely high demand for pedestrian-friendly facilities
  - Connections to desirable locations, such as parks, schools, existing trails, historic attractions, business districts and residential areas
- Including multiple natural settings (e.g., woodlands, wetlands, prairies, streams)
  - Signs, safety, maps/guides (hard copy and Internet), and future maintenance
  - Universal design
- 6) Facilitate meeting consumer needs for low-cost, close-to-home, minimal equipment expenditure, and natural-talent-oriented outdoor activities and opportunities.  
Consider:
- Facilities/programs designed for
    - People seeking social interaction
    - Low socioeconomic-status individuals
    - Persons with disabilities or limitations
    - Overweight/obese population
    - Aging population, particularly those with increased chronic conditions and their related limitations
  - Passive and extreme recreation opportunities

